

to VI(o) in the embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figure 3. Appropriate amendment has been made to page 5 to more clearly and directly define the minimum current voltage level.

The specification has been amended to clarify the language of claim 7 (see amendment to page 8, line 1).

Claim 8 has been amended to reflect that the maximum voltage level is the maximum current voltage level, as described above. Claims 9 and 14 again reference the maximum current voltage levels, which are described and supported on page 5 and Figure 3 as discussed above.

Claims 1-6 and 9-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant has identified the maximum current voltage level and minimum current voltage level in Figure 3 and on page 5 of the detailed description, and so believes that the definitions of the phrases have been appropriately clarified.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being fully anticipated by either Hua et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,999,433) or Buono (U.S. Patent No. 5,949,222).

Claims 1 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being fully anticipated by applicant's admitted prior art as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 7, 8, and 9 to reflect that the minimum current voltage level is the voltage level at a minimum but nonzero current level (as was described on page 5, lines 20-30, illustrated in Figure 3, and clarified by amendment to page 5). Applicant believes the amended claims more clearly reflect the invention as described in the specification, and distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as amended are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (612) 349-9581 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on this 24 day of January, 2001.

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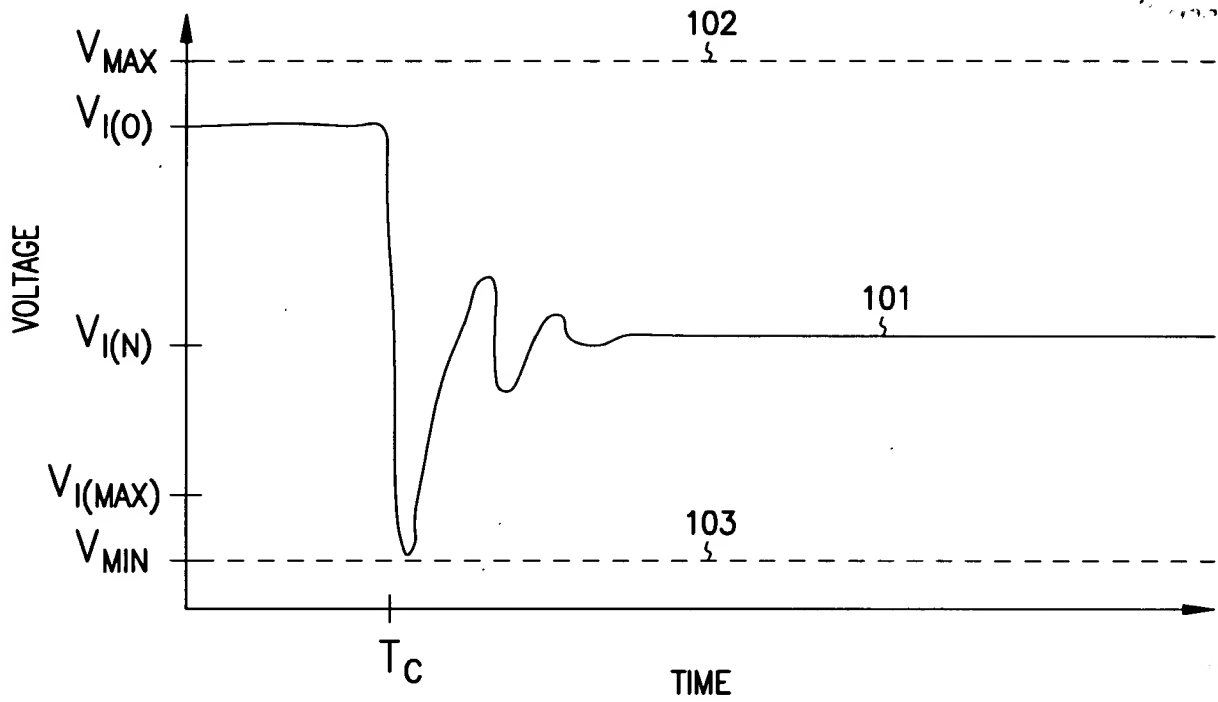


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

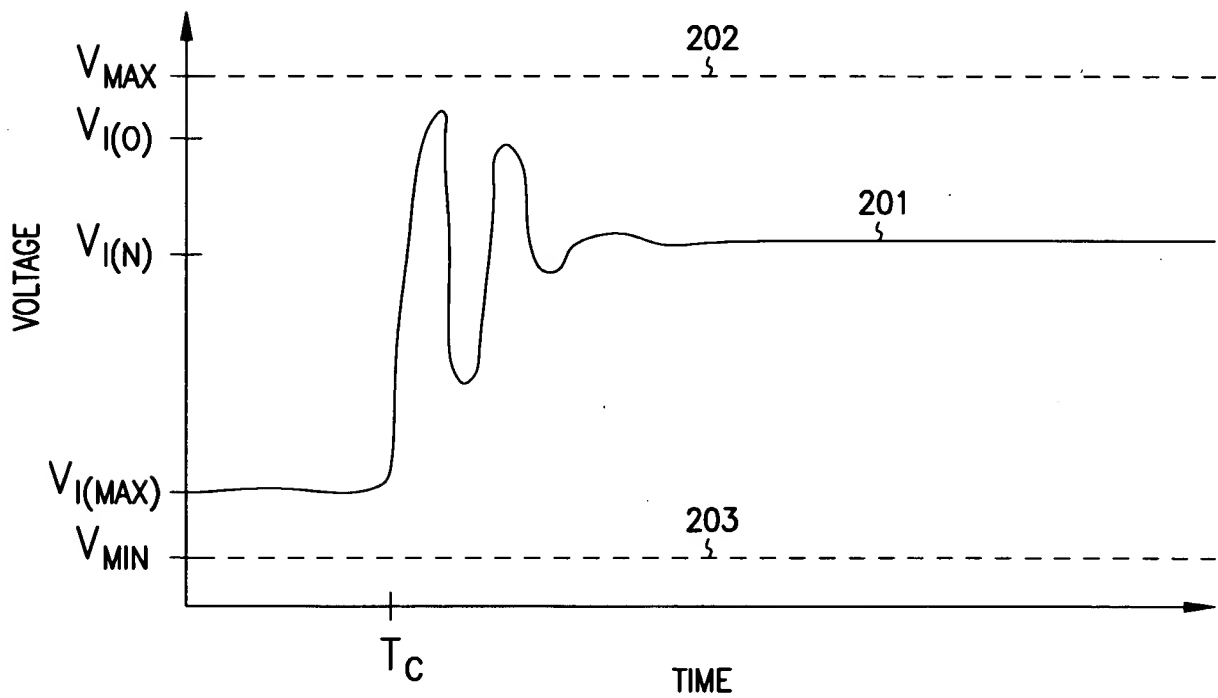


FIG. 2
(PRIOR ART)

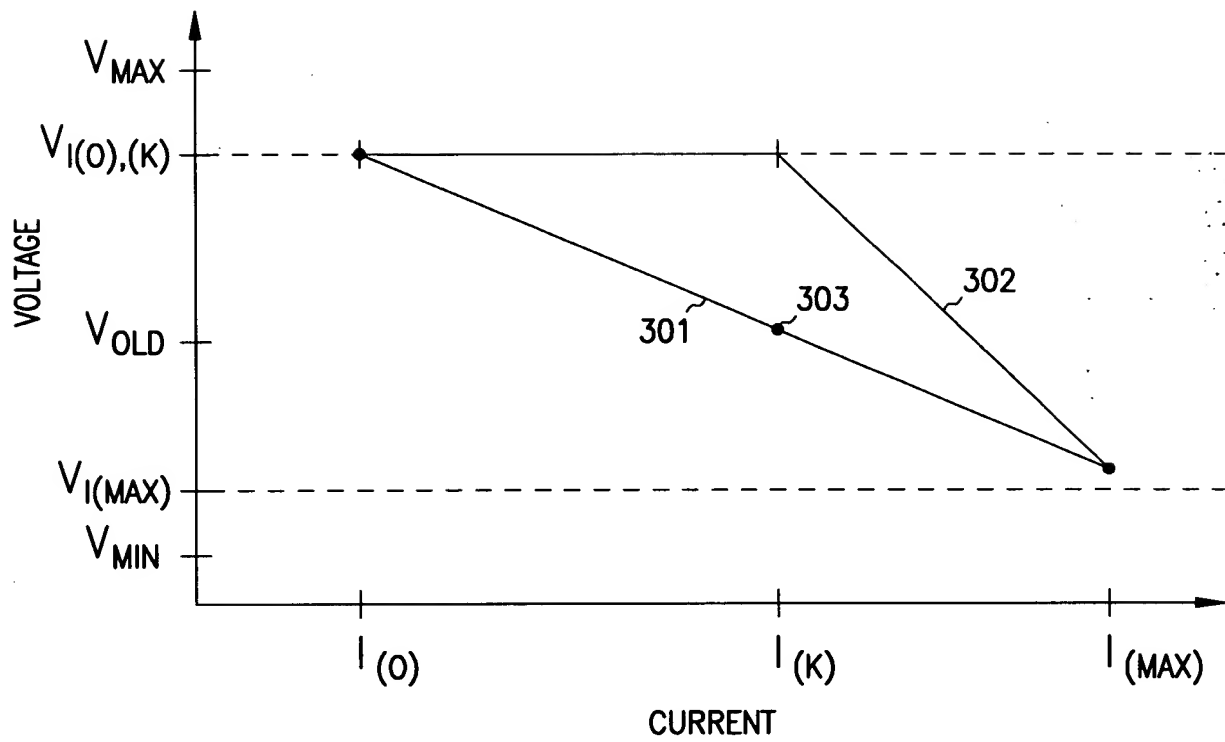


FIG. 3

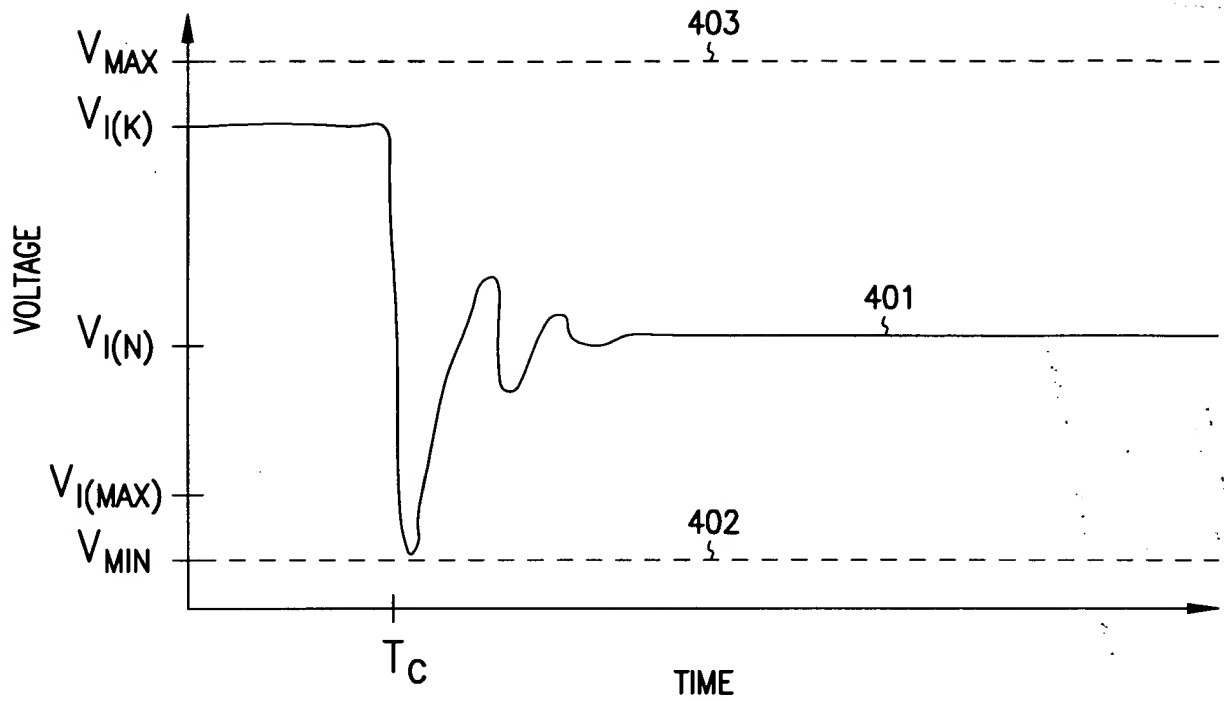


FIG. 4

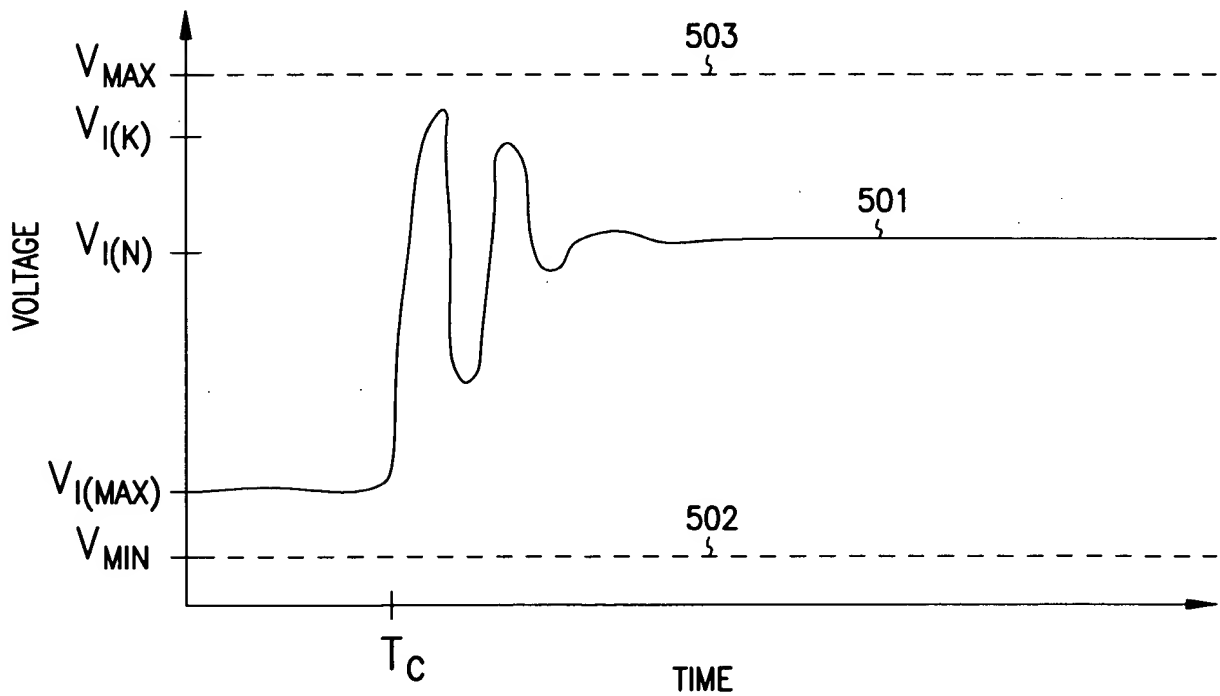


FIG. 5